2,00,000 products have been listed in this TKDL in five languages, and we are having a dialogue with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) plus 11 countries. We are going to register this TKDL in those countries so that nobody in the world can misuse our own products or any of these curable combinations or even any of the processes.

SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Sir, the hon. Minister has said that the State Governments are required to formulate an Action Plan. I would like to know how many States have sent their Action Plans, and how much money has been sanctioned for them to take up this medicinal plants project.

DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS: Currently, seven States have evinced interested in that. These States are Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Manipur, Bihar and Maharashtra. And we have released a sum of Rs.3.81 crores to Karnataka. In Madya Pradesh, 5.43 crores; in Tamil Nadu, 6.83 crores; in Kerala, under process, 2.39 crores; in Manipur, under process, 3.68 crores; in Bihar, under process, 1.09 crores; in Maharashtra, under process, 2.39 crores.

Export of Wheat

*83. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether United States' Department of Agriculture has gone ahead to project that India may ease nearly two year old ban on wheat shipment in May and even use its large central reserve for exporting the foodgrains after the rabi harvest;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how it would be useful to our country especially for the farmers of Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The USDA Foreign Agriculture Service has published the Global Agriculture information Network (GAIN) Report on 14.1.2009. As per this Report the Indian Government may remove export restrictions on wheat and make wheat available from Government stocks for exports after the harvest in May.

As per the USDA Report, because of the high support price of wheat in India, Indian wheat is unlikely to be competitive in the world market without an export subsidy.

Exports could benefit farmers, if price realization from exports is higher than domestic prices The production of wheat in Andhra Pradesh is not significant.

SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: What price are the farmers of Andhra Pradesh getting in terms of export of wheat as compared to rice? What are the details for the current year?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: We have practically not booked any wheat in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra

Pradesh is a State which produces paddy and the Government procures paddy in Andhra Pradesh. The Government of India is not procuring any wheat in Andhra Pradesh. But, generally, the price which was fixed last year by the Government of India for procurement of wheat was Rs. 1000 per quintal. This year, the price announced by the Government is Rs. 1080 per quintal.

SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: What steps is the Government taking to control the price of wheat in Andhra Pradesh as compared to other States? What steps have been taken in the current year?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: As I said earlier, we do not procure wheat at all in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the going futures market price in the CBOT for wheat and what is expected to be the spot price in the month of May in the same market?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I have got the details of the futures market. Generally, we are regularly observing that the price which is there in the open market for wheat for the last 12 months is exactly at the same level. There is no variation; there is no change. One of the main reasons is that there is an ample quantity of wheat available with the Government of India. Our production was also the largest that we had seen last year. Last year, the procurement was also quite high. That is one of the reasons why the price has been maintained at a particular level. Internationally, our recent report is that the prices are going down. In fact, I have got the information about the FOB price for wheat, which, on 17th February 2009 in the USA, was 188.70 dollars. That is the information. But, generally, the price of wheat is not a serious problem in our country because of ample stocks available here.

DR. K. MALAISAMY: Sir, from the reply of the hon. Minister, it can be seen that there is enough incentive, or, rather extra incentive for export promotion. As a consequence of that kind of export of wheat, there will be export attraction for farmers, with the result that this may lead to shortage in the supply of wheat in our country. In such a situation, I would like to know whether our country will be short of wheat production. Or, do we have plenty of production? Will there be any problem because of export promotion?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Shortage is not at all a problem, so for as wheat is concerned. I can give you the figures. Generally, our requirement for public distribution is about 110 to 120 lakh tonnes per year. Our procurement is 226 lakh tonnes. Our buffer stock is now 40 lakh tonnes per year. Today our buffer stock position is around 130 lakh tonnes. In fact, the serious problem which I am facing is what to do with this.

How to dispose it? And, that is the reason we have requested the State Governments that whatever their requirements for AAY, BPL, that we are 100 per cent fulfilling; plus, if there is a demand from any State for APL quota, that also, we are ready to enhance, and we are enhancing it.

SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, who is a great liberaliser and a globaliser, that because of this surplus of wheat. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, do you want such a certificate?

SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Brindaji should not interrupt me, Sir, because she is such a senior Member. Sir, because of this huge stock, which is very difficult to store, I request the hon. Minister to use his good offices with the Government of the United States, which is, I must say with all responsibility, Sir, shamefully protecting its agriculture by high tariff walls, by production support and by export subsidy. Will he try, if he wants to export, to use his good offices with the Government of United States to prevent their artificial support to their very high cost agricultural products?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: You see, it is true that too much stock is a problem for this country today. Then, secondly, whatever the latest report of the second advanced crop of wheat is also quite comfortable. It is somewhat near to last year. Whatever price the Government of India has announced this year, all wheat-producing States' report, which has been received in my Ministry, is that we should be ready to procure more than last year. In fact, last year's procurement was one of the highest procurements in the last 60 years, and, probably, this year, we will procure more. So, in such a situation, we have started giving serious thought what to do with this and how to dispose it. In fact, two years back, the country was facing shortage, and that is why we had introduced some of the restrictions. The restrictions were such that we had practically opened import without any duty. The second decision which we had taken long back was that we had stopped export of wheat products outside India. Thirdly, we introduced stock limits just to see that there will not be hoarding or any other situation. Now, we have received many representations from various organisations that if the availability is a problem today, storage is a problem, the Government should try to remove all these restrictions which had been introduced since two years back. And, that particular proposal is before us to take a final view, and I am sure that we will be able to take some view on all these issues within ten days' time.

Pressure of passengers at railway stations

84. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the strength of daily railway passengers from Agartala to Dharmanagar is exceedingly high and beyond the present in-take capacity of the trains;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the ticket booking system prior to departure of the trains at Agartala and other major stations cannot cope with the pressure of passengers; and

(c) if so, the remedy for the solution of the problems outlined above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI. R. VELU): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) At the current level of passenger traffic between Agartala and Dharmanagar, the existing number of trains are considered adequate.

(b) The number of counters available at the stations on Dharmanagar- Agartala section are adequate keeping in view the number of tickets currently being sold at these stations.